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P L A N N I N G   A N D   D E V E L O P M E N T   C O M M I T T E E

H.B. 6153 AN ACT AUTHORIZING LIMITED LIABILITY COMPANIES TO VOTE IN  
ELECTIONS IN THE THOMPSONVILLE FIRE DISTRICT

TESTIMONY OF DOMINIC P. ALAIMO  
COMMISSIONER, THOMPSONVILLE FIRE DISTRICT

Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas, Senator Fasano, Representative Aman, distinguished members of the Planning and Development Committee, good morning.

My name is Dominic Alaimo. I am a Commissioner of the Thompsonville Fire District and have served as a Commissioner since 2005. I appear before you today to speak in opposition to H.B. 6153, "An Act Authorizing Limited Liability Companies to Vote in Elections in Thompsonville Fire District".

Who should or shouldn't be able to vote in fire district elections? This is the fundamental question which underlies this legislation. Until recently, voting in fire district elections was limited to residents of the district. Legislation enacted in 2009 extended voting to non-resident property owners. I strongly supported this legislation because I believe that the district's property owners should have a say on the taxes charged by the district. It is common for municipalities to allow non-resident property owners to vote on referenda.

However, this bill takes the concept of participatory democracy too far. I am not aware of a single town or fire district in the State of Connecticut which allows corporations to vote in their affairs. Are you? Certainly corporations are not allowed to vote in state elections.

There is a reason why the district pushed for voting by non-resident property owners. We wanted to give landlords and small-business owners an opportunity to vote, because of their strong personal stake in the business of district. A person who chooses to limit their liability by holding property through a corporation simply does not have that same stake.

I want to note for the record that Rep. Alexander proposed this legislation without consulting with Thompsonville's Board of Fire Commissioners. We have invited Rep. Alexander to attend our meetings and tour our dilapidated fire station. To date, he has not taken us up on this offer. This legislation was not requested by the district and we regard it as hostile to our interests.

I appear before you today to respectfully request that you reject this ill-advised legislation.